

**United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

**Categorical Exclusion
DOI-BLM-CO-SO50-2016-0014 CX**

January 2016

Etchart-Inda Grazing Preference Transfer

Location: Montrose County

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Uncompahgre Field Office
2465 South Townsend Avenue
Montrose, CO 81401
Phone: (970) 240-5300**



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CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-S050-2016- 0014 CX

PROJECT NAME: Etchart-Inda Grazing Preference Transfer

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Portions of the following:

T. 48 N., R. 10 W., Sec. 5, 6, 7, 8, and 18

T. 48 N., R. 11 W., Sec. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 34, and 35

T. 48 N., R. 12 W., Sec. 13 and 24

T. 49 N., R. 10 W., Sec. 19, 20, 29, 30, 31, and 32

T. 49 N., R. 11 W., Sec. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 33, 34, 35, and 36,
New Mexico Principal Meridian

See Map 1

APPLICANT: Etchart Sheep Ranch

BACKGROUND: Grazing preference and base property for Pipeline #05507, Franklin Mesa #05512, Dry Creek Basin #05513, and South Piney #05515 allotments has been held by Etchart Sheep Ranch since 2013. In association with the issuance of these permits, in July 2013 BLM issued a decision to change class of livestock from cattle only to sheep and cattle, based on 2013-DOI-BLM-CO-S050-2011-0020 EA. Since 2013, Etchart Sheep Ranch has taken non-use on these allotments.

In December 2015 Etchart Sheep Ranch submitted an application to have the grazing preference on these allotments, which is attached to their base property, transferred to a base property owned by Calvin and Valorie Inda.

The transfer of grazing preference is considered administrative in nature and serves to transfer livestock grazing privileges, with the same class of livestock and forage allocation, from one grazing preference holder to another. Approval of grazing preference transfers are outlined in 43 CFR 4110.2-1(d) and 4110.2-3.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION:

The proposed action is to transfer grazing preference from the 289 acre base property known as the Etchart Sheep Ranch to a 196 acre base property on TBD 2275 Road in Delta and Montrose

Counties, as described in Form 4130-a Grazing Preference Transfer Application, Attachment A dated 12/21/2015. Approval of this transfer of grazing preference would result in the base property being changed from the property owned by Etchart Sheep Ranch to the property owned by Calvin and Valorie Inda. Grazing preference for Pipeline #05507, Franklin Mesa #05512, Dry Creek Basin #05513, and South Piney #05515 allotments would therefore be held by Calvin and Valorie Inda. This property has been found to be a qualified base property, and Calvin and Valorie Inda have been found to be qualified applicants.

The grazing allotments involved and the associated grazing preference and season of use are summarized in the table below. The proposed action is compliant with 43 CFR 4110.2-1(d) and 4110.2-3.

| Allotment Name & No. | Percent Public Land | Active AUM's | Suspended AUM's | Permitted AUM's | Permitted Season of Use |
|----------------------|---------------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Pipeline 05507 | 100 | 201 | 0 | 201 | 5/1 – 5/31 |
| Pipeline 05507 | 100 | 399 | 0 | 399 | 12/15 – 3/10 |
| Franklin Mesa 05512 | 100 | 215 | 0 | 215 | 12/15 – 3/10 |
| Dry Creek Basin | 100 | 50 | 0 | 50 | 5/1 – 5/31 |
| Dry Creek Basin | 100 | 215 | 0 | 215 | 12/15 – 3/10 |
| South Piney | 100 | 73 | 0 | 73 | 5/1 – 5/31 |
| South Piney | 100 | 111 | 0 | 111 | 12/15 – 3/10 |

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The Proposed Action is subject to and has been reviewed for conformance with (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3) the following plan:

Name of Plan: Uncompahgre Basin Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision

Date Approved: 1989

Decision Number/Page: 36

Decision Language: The project area contains management units 1, 2 and 3 under the 1989 Uncompahgre Basin Resource Management Plan.

Management Area 1: Management unit 1 will be intensively managed to improve vegetation conditions and livestock forage. Livestock grazing will have first priority for any additional forage to increase forage available for livestock grazing. Allotment management plans will be prepared to identify grazing management practices. Any unallotted areas or relinquished permits will be reissued to permit livestock grazing.

Management Area 2: Any proposed projects must be compatible with wildlife objectives. Additional forage will be available for livestock use only if not needed by wildlife.

Management Area 3: No projects will be permitted which would reduce the woodland base. This management will increase production of woodland products.

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW: The proposed action qualifies as a Categorical Exclusion under 516 DM 11.9, Number D.1, which allows "approval of transfers of grazing preference". This is the administrative approval of grazing preference transfer applications.

None of the following exceptions in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2, apply.

| Exclusion | YES | NO |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Have significant adverse effects on public health and safety. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Have adverse effects on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands, floodplains; national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Be directly related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have adverse effects on designated Critical Habitat for these species. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Violate a Federal law, or a State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Have disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites by Indian religious practitioners or adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Title</u> |
|---------------|---------------|
| Ken Holsinger | Biologist |
| Glade Hadden | Archaeologist |

REMARKS:

Cultural Resources: Transfer of grazing preference will have no direct or indirect impact to any National Register or otherwise eligible historic properties. No inventory is required under the provisions of BLM 2110.23B4 and no further work is required.

Native American Religious Concerns: There are none known or anticipated for this action.

Threatened and Endangered Species:


While the action of transferring the permit does not impact any special status or wildlife species, the action of livestock grazing may have affects. These effects will be analyzed at the time of grazing permit renewal.

The Pipeline, Franklin Mesa, Dry Creek Basin, and South Piney allotments are approximately four miles from overall desert bighorn sheep range on the USFS lands, six miles from ranges on BLM lands, and seven miles from bighorn production area as mapped by CPW. Portions of the Dry Creek area could potentially provide suitable habitat for desert bighorn sheep in the future. While the action of transferring the permit will have no effect on desert bighorn sheep or it's habitat, the action of sheep livestock grazing may have affects. Those affects were analyzed in detail in an environmental assessment (DOI-BLM-CO-S050-2011-0020) and appropriate conservation measures were attached to the terms and conditions of the four allotments. It was determined, in that EA, that the addition of domestic sheep would not increase the "probability of interaction" between domestic and wild sheep and should not cause a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability for desert bighorn sheep. Otherwise there are no threatened, endangered, or species considered sensitive by the BLM that would be impacted by the proposed action.

NAME OF PREPARER: Angela LoSasso

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR:

DATE:


2/2/16

DECISION AND RATIONALE:

I have reviewed this Categorical Exclusion and have decided to approve the administrative transfer of grazing preference on Pipeline #05507, Franklin Mesa #05512, Dry Creek Basin #05513, and South Piney #05515 allotments to a base property held by Calvin and Valorie Inda.

There are no impacts to public land since the transfer action only results in a transfer of grazing preference. The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9, Section: D, Range Management, Number 1, which allows "approval of transfers of grazing preference". I have evaluated the action relative to the 12 criteria listed above and have determined that it does not represent an exception and is, therefore, categorically excluded from further environmental analysis.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: _____

Jaral Dawson, Acting
Field Manager
Uncompahgre Field Office

DATE SIGNED: _____

2/12/14

Map 1

